



DUNGOG SHIRE COUNCIL

COMPANION ANIMAL

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgement

In preparing this plan it is acknowledged that many of the issues relating to the management of companion animals are typical and consistent throughout most Council areas and that there are benefits in adopting a Regional approach to some issues. For this reason, the Plan has been prepared utilising the design, framework and many concepts of the Newcastle City Council Companion Animal Management Plan 2004 and more recent work by Port Stephens Council. Dungog Shire Council acknowledges the intellectual property of its authors and also their consent in translating much of its terminology, ideas and concepts into the Dungog Shire Council Companion Animals Plan 2007.

The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 defines companion animals as dogs and cats. Pet ownership is a normal part of everyday Australian life. In terms of dog ownership, 40% of Australian Households own a dog with around 25% owning cats (Chaseling 2001). Given that there are approximately 3,500 households in the Shire, a significant proportion of our community have a direct involvement in companion animal issues through pet ownership with the balance of the community being exposed to the impacts of pet ownership in one way or another.

Council uses a range of education and enforcement tools to achieve its companion animal objectives. The Plan identifies key issue and develops and prioritises actions to address these issues.

Education and promotion of responsible pet ownership is the guiding principle behind this plan. The Plan aims to:

- balance the needs of the community, the environment and companion animals;
- identify gaps in current planning;
- provide a framework for prioritising actions; and

provide measurable indicators with timeframe for the assessment of plan outcomes.

The Plan has been developed following consultation with Council staff other Councils and the general community.

POLICY STATEMENT FOR COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

Dungog Shire Council as part of its vision – “A vibrant, united community, with a sustainable economy. An area where rural character, community safety and lifestyle are preserved” – recognises the importance of Companion Animal Management to the community, the environment, to people and animals.

Council will use available and reasonable resources in education and enforcement strategies which will encourage responsible pet ownership and foster cooperation and acceptance from the community.

We will be guided in achieving our aims by the following ***principles of responsible pet ownership:***

Appropriate pet selection;
Basic animal welfare;
Identification and Registration
Desexing;
Containment;
Environmental harmony and the preservation of biodiversity;
Socialisation;
Lifetime commitment.

Councils Companion Animal Management ***objectives*** are -

- To encourage and enforce the permanent microchip identification and lifetime registration of all companion animals.
- To provide a fast and efficient service for customers in data entry to the NSW Companion Animals Register and to answer enquiries promptly and accurately.
- To facilitate the prompt return to owner of seized animals and therefore reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded.
- To provide a best practice animal refuge and transport facilities for impounded animals.
- To ensure that Council staff regard animal welfare as a high priority in all dealings with the community and their companion animals.
- To encourage companion animal owners to provide appropriate mental and physical challenges for their companion animal that improve animal welfare and reduce adverse impact on the general community.
- To improve owner's awareness of their responsibility to maintain their animal under effective control in public places.
- To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks.
- To provide leash free areas for dogs across the Council area that are as safe as possible for dogs and people.
- To minimise the noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve community comfort and amenity.
- To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on water catchments.
- To increase the awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on biodiversity and in particular our valuable Koala population.
- To encourage and promote desexing of non-breeding stock.
- To seek and develop educational opportunities to promote responsible pet ownership.
- To ensure that companion animals staff are well trained and are dynamic in their learning and updating of skills in relation to their functions.
- To improve community awareness of the importance of safety around Companion Animals in a move to minimise the occurrence of dog attacks.

Responsible Pet Ownership

The privilege of owning and enjoying the companionship of a pet carries with it the dual responsibilities of care for the animal, and respect for the community and the environment.

Responsible pet ownership includes appropriate pet selection, basic health and welfare principles, identification, registration, desexing, secure confinement, environmental enrichment, socialisation, training and lifetime commitment.

A responsible pet owner:

- When at home, confines their animal in their yard to prevent impacts on public safety and the environment;
- When in public places, ensures that their dog is under effective control by means of a leash (except in leash free areas);
- Keeps their animals out of prohibited areas;
- Makes sure their animal is identified with a microchip, collar and tag to assist in returning the animal if it becomes lost;
- Registers their animal on the State register;
- Desexes their animal to minimise nuisance behaviour, minimise numbers of unwanted animals and have a cleaner, healthier, happier animal; and
- Cleans up after their animal.
- Council staff emphasise the importance of responsible pet ownership when dealing with animal owners. Many of the Plan actions involve education of the community on aspects of responsible pet ownership.

ANIMAL ISSUES

Identification and Registration

Objective

To encourage the permanent microchip identification of all companion animals in Dungog Shire to facilitate the prompt return of lost or stray companion animals to their owners.

To encourage the state-wide lifetime registration of all companion animals in Dungog Shire in accordance with the Act. To provide a fast and efficient service for customers updating or registering details on the NSW Companion Animal Register.

Background

The Companion Animals Act requires that companion animals be micro chipped by 12 weeks of age, and be registered by 6 months of age. The microchip and registration process allows lost or straying companion animals to be identified and returned to their owners as quickly as possible, generally avoiding the need for the animals to be impounded. Around 80% of the revenue received from companion animal registrations is provided to Council, which supports Councils programs in companion animal management.

Micro chipping must be carried out by authorised identifiers such as veterinarians, breeders and animal welfare staff. Councils pound operator is also an authorised identifier, enabling Council to assist members of the community to microchip impounded animals prior to release.

Issues

- Not all authorised identifiers send in identification forms within the statutory time limit.
- There is still community confusion over the two-step process in the

legislation i.e. identification then registration.

- There are still a large number of companion animals that are identified but not registered.
- Some previously annually registered dogs (amnesty ended September 2002) have not been micro chipped or lifetime registered.
- Not all companion animal owners update their change of address details on the register.
- The total number of dogs and cats that are not micro chipped and registered is unknown.

Actions

1. Provide educational materials to local companion animal service industries to promote identification and registration of companion animals.
2. Liaise with Hunter Councils to hold regular 'Regional Rego Roundups' and other events to facilitate identification, registration and responsible pet ownership.
3. Provide information on registration and desexing and other educational material to owners of companion animals when their animal is micro chipped.
4. Compile a Database of accredited micro chipping agents for distribution to the public.
5. Display material within veterinary surgeries which reminds companion animal owners to notify of changes to ownership, address and other details.
6. Support educational strategies to promote micro chipping and registration.

Impounding Animals

Objective

To facilitate the prompt return to owner of seized animals and therefore reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded.

To provide a best practice animal care facility and transport for impounded animals.

Background

Council aims to return as many animals to their owner as possible, however animals must be impounded when an owner cannot be identified or contacted.

When animals are impounded, they are held for up to 14 days and are then either offered for sale or euthanased. Animals are euthanased when they are unclaimed and determined to be unsuitable for resale.

Issues

- There are difficulties in returning companion animals to their owners as they are often not contactable, not home or have changed address.
- Whenever animals are impounded, disease transmission and other animal welfare factors such as stress are of concern.
- Owners are liable to significant costs in impound and sustenance fees where animals have remained in the pound for extended periods.

Actions

7. Ensure that companion animal transport and impound protocols follow best practice guidelines provided by NSW Agriculture.
8. Investigate the placement of digital photos of unidentified stray animals on Council's website to facilitate the release of animals

from the pound and reduce rates of euthanasia.

9. Encourage authorised identifiers and staff to record as much owner contact information as possible to facilitate their prompt return to owner.

Animal Welfare

Objective

To ensure Council staff regard animal welfare as a high priority in all dealings with the community and their companion animals.

To encourage companion animal owners to provide appropriate mental and physical challenges for their companion animal that improve animal welfare and reduce adverse impact on the general community.

Background

Animal welfare is defined as providing appropriate nutrition, shelter, exercise, and interaction to enhance the physical and mental well-being of an animal. Animal welfare is intricately linked to the welfare of their owners.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) is the lead agency in managing animal welfare in NSW. Given that Council is actively involved in other aspects of companion animal management, it is appropriate that Council cooperate with the RSPCA to ensure that animal welfare issues are appropriately addressed. In many cases, animal welfare issues give rise to nuisance behaviours such as barking or straying and therefore Council has a supplementary role in the issue.

Many urban pet problems arise from animals experiencing frustration or boredom causing reactions such as barking, chasing, and jumping up. By providing environmental enrichment such as the addition of cognitive, dietary, physical, sensory and social stimuli, the animal's physiological and psychological well being can be improved.

Desexing companion animals has been encouraged through the registration fee structure incorporated into the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998. Council provides educational material on the benefits of desexing. Early desexing reduces potential pet behavior problems

such as roaming, mounting, and urine spraying in companion animals (Hopkins 1976).

Issues

- Large numbers of animals kept in confined spaces can cause animal welfare concerns, in addition to causing nuisance behaviour.
- Undesexed animals are at greater risk of straying and contribute to the numbers of unwanted pets. There are also claims that undesexed animals are not as clean, quiet or healthy as desexed animals.

Actions

10. Continue to promote the benefits of desexing of companion animals.
11. Provide assistance to organisations which provide reduced rate desexing of companion animals.
12. Provide information to the community on appropriate animal housing and care as recommended by the RSPCA.
13. Review Councils Local Orders Policy for the keeping of animals.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Public Safety

Objective

To improve community awareness of the importance of safety around companion animals.

To improve owner's awareness of their responsibility to maintain their animal under effective control in public places.

To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks.

Background

Dog attacks compromise public safety and affect the right of the community to be safe in a public place and on private property.

Children are a high-risk group in terms of dog attacks.

Issues

- Owners of dangerous dogs do not always comply with the requirements of Council's dangerous dog declaration. Ongoing compliance with the terms of the declaration need to be monitored.
- The legislative requirement for childproof enclosures for declared dangerous dogs and restricted breeds has been recently updated. These dogs need to be identified and monitored to ensure compliance with the new standards.

Actions

14. Design an information system which will enable dog attack information to be monitored and reported on.
15. Prepare a dangerous dog protocol and review as appropriate.

16. Conduct annual audits of premises where declared dangerous dogs and restricted breeds are kept and assess issues including adequacy of childproof enclosures.
17. Provide information and advice to owners of restricted breeds and dangerous dogs to ensure compliance with relevant Companion Animals Legislation.

Dog Exercise Areas

Objective

To provide leash free areas across the Dungog Local Government Area to provide opportunities for dogs to exercise.

Background

The purpose of leash free areas is to allow dogs to exercise off lead so they can 'burn off' excess energy in a safe environment without being a nuisance to the general public and to provide socialisation experience with other dogs.

By providing these opportunities, dogs are less likely to exhibit nuisance behaviour due to boredom and frustration when confined to their yard. Under the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998, Council is obliged to provide one leash free areas were chosen following an extensive process of community consultation.

Issues

- Owners who do not maintain effective control of their dog in the leash free area.
- Relevance of additional leash free areas across the Council area to cater for residents without a local facility.
- Council's information to residents regarding dog exercise areas is confusing.
- Lack of signage

Actions

18. Investigate the creation of additional leash free areas in areas where such facilities are currently not provided.
19. Manage and monitor leash free areas to ensure inappropriate use.
20. Information on leash free areas is part of all pet information packs provided to the community.
21. Investigate information available to public in regard to its accessibility, simplicity and accuracy.
22. Prepare a list of dog exercise areas where usage or signage is confusing or inadequate and initiate improvements.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Companion animals can adversely affect the environment in a number of ways – noise pollution, water pollution, faecal pollution and predation on native fauna.

Educating companion animal owners to take responsibility for their animals will help the owner to redirect their animal's activity to minimise impact on the surrounding environment.

Noise Pollution

Objective

To minimise the noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve community amenity.

Background

Barking dogs account for approximately 50% of noise complaints received by Council and 20% of all companion animal complaints.

Investigation of barking dog complaints is resource consuming and relevant legislation is difficult to enforce.

Issues

- Barking dogs are a labour intensive issue for Council with a large portion of staff and Rangers time spent on barking dog problems.
- Barking continues to cause annoyance and discomfort to the neighbourhood.
- There is a lack of local information available to enable the general barking issue to be monitored and managed.

Actions

23. Develop a Dog Noise Strategy that identifies procedures for addressing barking dog complaints.

24. Design a system of information, collection and monitoring in relation to dog noise complaints

Water Pollution

Objective

To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on the water catchments of the Dungog Shire.

Background

Companion animal faeces are a significant environmental and public health issue in urban areas. Pollution of domestic yards, footpaths, parks and reserves by animal faeces and the consequent pollution of waterways by storm water run-off is of environmental concern. Pet droppings contribute to increased levels of phosphorous and other potentially harmful nutrients in our waterways.

Diseases such as parasites, protozoa and bacteria can be transmitted to people and animals via faecal material and contaminated storm water.

There is a potential for infections to be passed to humans from animals, particularly Hookworm and Roundworm. Eggs from these worms can remain dormant in the environment for up to one year.

To assist in resolving these pollution problems, Council has distributed education material that emphasises the importance of appropriate disposal of dog faeces.

Issues

- Council staff receive intermittent reports of companion animal owners not picking up their dog's faeces.
- There is a need for dog owners to be educated regarding the importance of being prepared and equipped to pick up dog faeces prior to leaving home.
- Householders also need to be aware of the environmental consequences of accumulations of dog faeces on private property.

Actions

25. Review use of park, recreational facilities and public places to identify areas where dog faeces may lead to pollution.
26. Distribute Companion Animal educational material and storm water pamphlets at appropriate community events
27. Encourage the community to provide their own bags as part of responsible pet ownership.
28. Reiterate the importance of the regular removal of dog faeces from private property in all of Councils responsible pet ownership programs.
29. Investigate the use of dung beetles into recreational and leash free areas

Biodiversity

Objective

To increase the awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on the biodiversity of the Dungog Shire.

Background

The NSW Wildlife Atlas identifies the presence of 47 threatened animal species in the Dungog Local Government Area (State of the Environment Report 2006).

Community education and responsible pet ownership programs should emphasise that dumping of unwanted litters in bushland, industrial estates or nature reserves is irresponsible, environmentally destructive and illegal.

Feral cats and dogs and free-ranging domestic cats and dogs are responsible for a significant number of wildlife deaths every year. It is therefore important that appropriate emphasis be placed upon the management of these animals. Whilst the Companion Animals Act prescribes specific containment requirements for domestic dogs, the control of domestic cats, especially to limit their nocturnal wanderings is not specifically and clearly legislated.

Cats can be confined to the house for their entire life, provided appropriate environmental enrichment is available.

The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 provides that companion animals may be prohibited from wildlife protection areas at the discretion of Council. National Parks and Nature Reserves are also prohibited areas for companion animals. Owners can be fined if their companion animal is found within these areas.

Domestic cats provide a reservoir of breeding animals for wild populations and continually increase the wildcat population. They also have other detrimental impacts on biodiversity such as predation of native animals.

Issues

- Dogs off lead in parks and reserves are a threat to native animals, particularly in the evenings as many arboreal animals travel from tree to tree.
- Uncontrolled dogs on rural and semi rural properties are a major threat to native animals.
- A cat is capable of killing many native animals (particularly small marsupials) and birds at night. Many owners allow their cats to roam at night.
- Many dog owners believed that they do not have to have their dog on a lead as long as they have it under control. This conflicts with the requirements of the Companion Animals Act.

Actions

30. Increase community awareness regarding the impact of companion animals on fauna.
31. Promote community awareness highlighting the advantages of keeping cats totally inside, including a voluntary cat curfew and the loss of small native animals and birds caused by cats roaming at night.
32. In conjunction with other Hunter Councils, government agencies, RSPCA and local veterinarians, target a community education program during peak cat breeding season to discourage dumping of kittens.
33. Investigate and facilitate programs that are targeted at management of unwanted litters
35. Emphasise in Council Responsible pet ownership education programmes that the Companion Animals Act requires all dogs to be restrained by a leash when in a public place (unless otherwise signposted).

Education

Objective

To establish and maintain a range of education strategies to promote responsible pet ownership and to support the regulatory functions of Council.

Background

The establishment and delivery of cost effective education programs should be the cornerstone of Councils companion animal management plan;

Council currently provides access to educational material through its website, and letter box drops.

Pamphlets are also forwarded to owners when animals are microchipped and in response to complaints from the public.

Issues

- Funds available for educational strategies are difficult to attract and maintain.
- Education strategies need to be continually reviewed to ensure relevance and also to ensure that the target audience is being met.
- The effectiveness of educational strategies is difficult to assess.

Actions

36. Review the effectiveness of regional micro chipping events.
37. Monitor all education activities to determine their effectiveness where possible.
38. Develop a comprehensive brochure on responsible pet ownership for use in all educational programs and consider methods of ensuring each household receives a copy on a regular basis.
39. Remain open and flexible to accommodate new educational ideas and strategies as they arise.

Performance Indicators

IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
1. Provide educational materials to local companion animal service industries to promote identification and registration of companion animals.	Medium	To encourage the permanent microchip identification of all companion animals in Dungog Shire to facilitate the prompt return of lost or stray companion animals to their owners. To encourage the statewide lifetime registration of all companion animals in the Shire in accordance with the Act.	Develop and distribute educational material annually.
2. Liaise with Hunter Councils to hold regular 'Regional Rego Roundup' and other events to facilitate identification, registration and responsible pet ownership.	High	To encourage the permanent microchip identification of all companion animals in Dungog Shire to facilitate the prompt return of lost or stray companion animals to their owners. To encourage the statewide lifetime registration of all companion animals in Dungog Shire in accordance with the Act.	Participate in Regional Rego Roundup
3. Provide information on registration, desexing and other educational material to owners of companion animals when their animal is micro chipped.	High	To encourage the statewide lifetime registration of all companion animals in Dungog Shire in accordance with the Act.	100% of owners of newly micro chipped animals are provided with information via mail regarding registration and desexing.
4. Compile a Database of accredited micro chipping agents for distribution to the public	High	To encourage the statewide lifetime registration of all companion animals in Dungog Shire in accordance with the Act.	Database of accredited microchip agents to be compiled and available to the public by December 2007.
5. Display material within veterinary surgeries which reminds companion animal owners to notify of changes to ownership, address and other details.	High	To facilitate the prompt return to owner of seized animals and therefore reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded	Distributed to vets by December 2007.
6. Support educational strategies to promote micro chipping and registration.	Medium	To encourage and enforce the permanent microchip identification and lifetime registration of all companion animals.	As funding for regional strategies becomes available.

IMPOUNDING ANIMALS

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
7. Ensure that companion animal transport and impound protocols follow best practice guidelines provided by NSW Agriculture.	High	To provide a best practice animal care facility and transport for impounded animals.	Ongoing issue but to be confirmed as satisfactory by July 2007
8. Investigate the placement of digital photos of unidentified stray animals on Council's website to facilitate the release of animals from the pound and reduce rates of euthanasia.	Medium	To facilitate the prompt return of seized animals.	Investigation of feasibility of digital photos on the internet to be completed by June 2007.
9. Encourage authorised identifiers and staff to record as much owner contact information as possible to facilitate their prompt return to owner.	Medium	To facilitate the prompt return to owner of seized animals and therefore reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded.	Increase in the number of animals returned to owner along with a corresponding decrease in instances where a lack of information on the Companion Animals Register leads to an impounding.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
10. Continue to promote the benefits of desexing of companion animals.	High	To ensure Council staff regard animal welfare as a high priority in all dealings with the community and their companion animals and to encourage and promote the desexing of non-breeding stock.	No performance indicator
11. Continue to provide assistance to organisations which provide reduced rate desexing of companion animals.	High	To encourage and promote desexing of non-breeding stock.	Continuance of programs which assist organisations who provide reduced rate desexing.
12. Provide information to the community on appropriate animal housing and care as recommended by the RSPCA.	Medium	To encourage companion animal owners to provide appropriate mental and physical challenges for their companion animal that improve animal welfare and reduce adverse impact on the general community.	Information regarding appropriate animals housing to be obtained and made available to the public by December 2007
13. Review Council's Local Orders Policy for the keeping of animals	Low	To ensure Council staff regard animal welfare as a high priority in all dealings with the community and their companion animals. To minimise the noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve the community amenity.	Policy to be reviewed by December 2007.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
14. Design an information system which will enable dog attack information to be monitored and reported on.	Medium	To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks	Information system to be designed and implemented by June 2008.
15. Prepare a dangerous dog protocol and review as appropriate.	High	To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks.	Dangerous Dog Protocol to be prepared by December 2007.
16. Conduct annual audits of premises where declared dangerous dogs are kept and assess issues including adequacy of childproof enclosures.	High	To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks.	Increase in compliance with dangerous dog control requirements. All premises with dangerous dogs inspected annually.
17. Provide information and advice to owners of restricted breeds and dangerous dogs to ensure compliance with relevant Companion Animals Legislation.	Medium	Nil	Through annual inspections

DOG EXERCISE AREAS

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
18. Investigate the creation of additional leash free areas in suburbs where such facilities are currently not provided.	Medium	To provide leash free areas across the Dungog Local Government area to provide opportunities for dogs to exercise.	Increase in number of leash free areas.
19. Manage and monitor leash free areas to ensure inappropriate use.	High	To provide leash free areas across the Dungog Local Government area to provide opportunities for dogs to exercise.	Patrols of leash free areas by Ranger remains constant or increases.
20. Information on leash free areas is part of all pet information packs provided to the community.	Medium	To provide leash free areas across the Dungog Local Government area to provide opportunities for dogs to exercise.	Information provided by June 2008.
21. Investigate information available to the public in regard to its accessibility, simplicity and accuracy.	High	To provide leash free areas across the Dungog Local Government area to provide opportunities for dogs to exercise.	Investigations and improvements made by June 2008.
22. Prepare a list of dog exercise areas where usage or signage is confusing or inadequate and initiate improvements.	Medium	To provide leash free areas across the Dungog Local Government area to provide opportunities for dogs to exercise.	Review of signage to be completed by June 2008.

NOISE POLLUTION

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
23. Develop a Dog Noise Strategy that identifies procedures for addressing barking dog complaints.	Medium	To minimise the noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve community amenity.	Written procedure for dealing with complaints to be in place by December 2007.
24. Design a system of information collection and monitoring in relation to dog noise complaints.	Medium	To minimise the noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve community amenity.	Information system completed and implemented by June 2008.

WATER POLLUTION

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
25. Review use of park, recreational facilities and public places to identify areas where dog faeces may lead to pollution.	Low	To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on the water catchments of the Dungog Local Government Area (LGA).	Review to be completed by June 2008
26. Distribute Companion Animal educational material and storm water pamphlets at appropriate community events	High	To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on the water catchments of the Dungog Local Government Area (LGA).	Increase in the distribution of educational material.
27. Encourage the community to provide their own bags as part of responsible pet ownership.	High	To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on the water catchments of the Dungog Local Government Area (LGA).	Reduction in complaints and reported incidents
28. Reiterate the importance of regular removal of dog faeces from private property in all of Councils responsible pet ownership programs.	High	To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on the water catchments of the Dungog Local Government Area (LGA).	Ongoing throughout all education programs.
29. Investigate the use of dung beetles into recreational and leash free areas	High	To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces on the water catchments of the Dungog Local Government Area (LGA).	Liaise with Port Stephens Councils and the DLG by December 2007.

BIODIVERSITY

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
30. Increase community awareness regarding the impact of companion animals on fauna.	High	To increase the awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on the biodiversity of the Dungog Local Government Area.	The impacts of Companion animals on biodiversity to be included in educational material by June 2008.
31. Promote community awareness highlighting the advantages of keeping cats confined, including a voluntary cat curfew and the loss of small native animals and birds caused by cats roaming at night.	High	To increase the awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on the biodiversity of the Dungog Local Government Area.	Ongoing
32. In conjunction with other Hunter Councils, government agencies, RSPCA and local veterinarians, target a community education program during peak cat breeding season to discourage dumping of kittens.	Medium	To increase the awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on the biodiversity of the Dungog Local Government Area.	Educational program to discourage dumping of kittens to be considered by June 2008.
33. Investigate and facilitate programs that are targeted at management of unwanted litters	Medium	To increase awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on the biodiversity of the Dungog Local Government Area.	Reviewed by June 2008.
35. Emphasise in responsible pet ownership programmes that the Companion Animals Act requires all dogs to be restrained by leash when in a public place (unless otherwise signposted).	Medium	To increase awareness and minimise the potential impact of companion animals on the biodiversity of the Dungog Local Government Area.	Ongoing

EDUCATION

Action	Priority (High/ Medium/ Low)	Related Objective	Performance Indicator
36. Review the effectiveness of subsidised micro chipping events.	Medium	To establish and maintain a range of education strategies to promote responsible pet ownership and to support the regulatory functions of Council	Regional Rego Round-Up to be held by December 2005 Effectiveness to be reviewed within 30 days of event
37. Monitor all educational activities to determine their effectiveness where possible	Medium	To establish and maintain a range of education strategies to promote responsible pet ownership and to support the regulatory functions of Council	No KPI
38. Develop a comprehensive brochure on responsible pet ownership for use in all educational programs and consider methods of ensuring each household receives a copy on a regular basis.	High	To establish and maintain a range of education strategies to promote responsible pet ownership and to support the regulatory functions of Council	Brochure to be completed by June 2006
39. Remain open and flexible to accommodate new educational ideas and strategies as they arise	Medium	No KPI	

Statistical Performance Indicators and Targets

Performance Indicator	2004/05	2005/6	2006/07
Number of animals micro chipped during the year.	91	142	
Number of animals registered during the year.	111	153	
Animals returned to owner.	27	27	
Number of animals desexed.	No Data	No Data	
Complaints regarding nuisance behaviour.	No Data	No Data	
Compliance with dangerous dog control requirements.	No Data	No Data	
Numbers of dog attacks.	No Data	No Data	
Number of mail outs or letter box drops			
Number of dog exercise areas.	1	1	
Number of animals impounded	38	39	
Number of impounded animals sold	2	4	
Number of impounded animals euthanased	9	8	

Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

Council aims to monitor, review and continually improve the implementation of the Companion Animal Management Plan to provide for efficient and sustainable management of urban companion animals.

Monitoring is integrated into the Plan so that if a strategy is ineffective it can be modified appropriately. Regular review of available statistical information helps to compare implementation actions with plan priorities. Continuous improvement will ensure sustainability of actions.

The Performance indicators will be reviewed annually by Staff.